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ABSTRACT

This study of the choice of verbs of motion by native speakers of Russian focused on four factors: quantifiers, sequencing, singularization, and progressive meaning with explicit reference to emotional state. Eight native speakers of Russian were asked to rate the grammatical acceptability of certain verbs in specific texts in which repeated motion toward a single, identified goal was clearly indicated. They were asked to choose whether the indeterminate or the determinate verb of motion was acceptable in the given context. In addition to repetition, the factors involved in the selection of an indeterminate verb to denote repeated motion events include numerical and adverbial quantifiers, and sequencing (overlapping or non-overlapping events). Singularization (e.g., "each time") in the text favors the determinate verb of motion as does the expression of progressive meaning with explicit reference to the emotional state of the "figure," that is, the object in motion. The discussion leads to two conclusions: first, determinate verbs are sensitive to the semantic/syntactic factors of overlapping/non-overlapping sequencing, processual meaning, and singularization, predictable by the relationship of these verbs to the temporal parameter; and secondly, speaker choice plays a large and somewhat complicated part in verb selection. The texts used are in both Russian and English. (MSE)

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Repetition, pragmatics and aspect*

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This paper will examine the role of speaker choice in aspect selection as illustrated by the use of the Russian paired imperfective verbs of motion of the type ходить/идти when used to denote repeated motion aimed at a specific, identified goal. The Russian verbs of motion are placed in a separate class because they constitute an anomaly in the aspect system of the language and therefore are of special interest to both the linguist and the second-language intructor. They are, be definition, paired imperfective verbs which denote movement (i.e. the physical displacement of a person/being or object) in space. The verbs are paired in the sense that the two members of the pair are each formed from the same historical root and each denote the same type, or manner, or motion (i.e. walking as opposed to running, etc.). They are unique withing the Russian aspectual system as a whole because they are paired imperfective verbs, whereas for other 'paired' verbs it is normal to speak of a pair consisting of an imperfective and perfective partner. Because the verbs of motion stand outside the aspect system, they present difficulties to the second-language learner and remain one of the most difficult topics for the student of Russian to master. They are also of great interest to the linguist at a time when the study of aspect is one of the foremost issues in current linguistic re-

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search.

Throughout this paper I will call one verb in the pair of motion verbs the <u>determinate</u> verb, and verbs of this type will be marked with a superscript <u>d</u> (e.g. идти^{d}). The other verb in the pair will be called the <u>indeterminate</u> verb, and will be marked with a superscript <u>i</u> (e.g. ходить^{i}). Unfortunately the labels <u>determinate</u> and <u>indeterminate</u> make implications about the semantics of the verbs themselves. However, these particular labels are used here because they are those most frequently seen in the current literature on verbs of motion. They are used here as arbitrary labels which make no claims about the semantics of the verbs. Two additional technical terms need to be introduced: <u>motion event</u> and <u>Figure</u>. The term <u>motion event</u> will be used to refer to the act of the physical displacement of an object or being in space and the term <u>Figure</u> to refer to the object or being which moves.[1]

In Russian, indeterminate verbs are regularly used to denote repeated motion events, i.e. motion events which occur more than once. The literature on verbs of motion asserts that the use of determinate verbs to denote repeated motion events is restricted by well-defined syntactic and semantic constraints.[2] Specifically, it is assumed that the determinate verbs are possible only in the situation where the motion is aimed at a single specific goal <u>and</u> one of the three following conditions is met: (1) the motion event occurs within a series of other actions or events; (2) the verb denotes a motion viewed as ongoing or in process (this use generally depends on the occurrence of another action or event); (3) the verb denotes the initial moment of motion,

i.e. the moment of the Figure's departure. These three environments are illustrated below.[3] Example (1) shows a determinate verb which denotes motion which repeatedly occurs where the Figure departs from one starting point and progresses towards one goal. This motion occurs within a series of other motions or events. The determinate ехала[d] is required; the indeterminate ездила[i] would be unacceptable:

(1) Ежедневно, вставши с постели часов в одиннадцать, Ольга Ивановна играла на рояле, или же, если было солнце, писала что-нибудь красками. Потом, в первом часу, она ехала[d] к своей портнихе [...] От портнихи Ольга Ивановна обыкновенно ехала[d] к какой-нибудь знакомой актрисе, чтобы узнать театральные новости и кстати похлопотать насчет билета к первому представлению новой пьесы или к бенефису.

Чехов, Попрыгунья

'Every day, having gotten up around eleven o'clock, Ol'ga Ivanovna played the piano or, if the sun was shining, she would do some oil painting. Then, between 12:00 and 1:00 she would go to her dressmaker. From the dressmaker's Ol'ga Ivanovna usually would go [to see] some actress actress acquaintance to find out the theater news or, more to the point, to see about a ticket to the first performance of a new play or some benefit.'

Repetition is clearly indicated by the adverb ежедневно 'every day'. The determinate verb is required to signal the repeated motion events due to the fact that the context provides a relatively "tight" sequencing of events. Ol'ga Ivanovna's day is presented as a series of events: (1) first she would get up; (2) then she would play the piano or paint; (3) then she would go to the dressmaker's (the first goal); (4) and then she would go from the dressmaker's to see an actress friend (the second goal). Thus

her day consists of a rather lengthy string of events. This context makes clear the fact that the Figure (Ol'ga Ivanovna) would go from one place directly to the next. Both instances of the determinate verb denote motion which occurs in this ordered sequence. This can be called (after Foley and Van Valin 1984) overlapping sequencing: the second event begins immediately upon termination of the first. The determinate verb is required to signal that, first of all, the actions proceed in precisely this order and, second, to indicate that Ol'ga Ivanovna arrives at each individual goal.

Example (2) illustrates the second use of a determinate verb to signal repeated motion events, that is, when the motion events are presented as ongoing or in progress:

(2) Каждое утро, когда я шел^{d} на катер и проходил ворота, меня всегда останавливала старуха сторож:
--А, это ты, батюшка?

Сахарнов, Трепанголовы

'Every morning as I was walking to the cutter and passing the gates, the old lady watchman would always stop me:
--Hey, is that you, young fellow?'

In (2), the motion denoted by the determinate шел^{d} is interrupted every morning while in process, while the Figure is on his way to the cutter; the motion is presented as a durative process. As in example (1), an indeterminate verb would be unacceptable in this context.

Determinate verbs may also be used to denote repeated motion events when they signal the intial moment of departure. This is illustrated in example (3). Here, every day Poliksena and the Figure take a break at 2:00 and the Figure sets off for the

buffet:

(3) Мы начинали писать в двенадцать часов, а в два часа происходил перерыв. Поликсена уходила к себе, чтобы навестить свое хозяйство, а я шел[d] в чайный буфет.

Булгаков, Театральный роман

'We would begin writing at twelve o'clock, and at two there would be a break. Poliksena would go home to put here housekeeping in order, and I would set off for the tea buffet.'

In this excerpt the narrator describes his daily routing while working on a manuscript. The fact of repetition is underlined by the use of the imperfective verbs начинали 'begin' and происходил 'take place'. Actually, two things are going on in this example: the determinate шел the initial moment of departure when the Figure sets off for the buffet and, also, the motion event occurs within a series of events: at noon Poliksena and the Figure start working and then at 2:00 they take a break. All native speakers questioned strongly preferred the determinate шел[d] over the corresponding indeterminate verb of motion.

When none of the above three conditions is met, there is a strong tendency for indeterminate verbs to be used to express repeated motion. But this is a tendency, and not an absolute rule. In certain environments, there seems to be little agreement among speakers as to what verb is acceptable or preferred. It is not that case that the majority of speakers, or even 50% of the speakers, find both verbs equally acceptable. I would now like to briefly discuss some sample texts in order to illustrate some of the problems, and to determine the factors involved in verb selection.

The examples in this section were all tested with eight

native speakers of Russian. The speakers were given typed copies of the examples where both the indeterminate and the determinate verbs of motion were supplied in that order. They were asked to choose which verb was acceptable in the given context or, if both verbs were acceptable, to rank their acceptability. The verb which appeared in the original text is underlined here, but it was in no way marked in the survey submitted to the speakers, nor were the speakers told the sources of the examples. The results of this survey are summarized in chart-form alongside each example. The following notation is used to indicate speaker preferance:

d = determinate verb of motion

i = indeterminate verb of motion

\+ = preferred/most frequent

? = marginal/infrequent

* = unacceptable

All the texts show repeated motion aimed at a single, identified goal which is explicitly given in the text. There is one partial exception to this, example (13). Yet although no goal is stated in (13), the motion events denote by both the indeterminate летала^{i} and the determinate летели^{d} are directed towards a goal. The story makes clear the fact that Sergeev and his wife are private citizens who, when they fly, fly somewhere on business or for a vacation. In testing these examples, it became clear that for some speakers the fact of repetition is an overriding concern and mandates the selection of an indeterminate verb. These speakers would admit a determinate verb only if there were

a number of factors supporting its selection. The factors which are involved in selection are as follows:

I. Quantifiers. In addition to repetition, the presence of quantifiers in the text strongly favors an indeterminate verb. Numerical quantifiers, like дважды в год 'two times a year' in (4), make the indeterminate virtually required: only one speaker considered the indeterminate and the determinate equally acceptable. All other speakers strongly preferred the indeterminate ездил^{i}.

(4) Новый эмир поставил во всех селениях отряды стражников и приказал жителям бесплатно кормить их, заложил множество новых мечетей и приказал жителям достраивать их,--он был очень набожен, новый эмир, и дважды в год обязательно (ездил/ехал) на поклонение праху святейшего и несравненного шейха Богаэдина, гробница которого высилась близ Бухари.

+d *i	+d ?i	+d +i	+i ?d	+i *d
-	-	1	2	5

Соловьев, Повесть о Ходже Насрединне

'The new emir stationed detachments of guards in all the settlements and ordered the populace to feed them without pay, he laid the foundation for a multitude of mosques and ordered the populace to finish building them, -- he was very pious, the new emir, and two times a year he would go to worship the ashes of the most holy and incomparable sheikh Bogaèdina, whose grave stood high near Buxara.'

Here five of the speakers questioned found only the indeterminate acceptable, and two strongly preferred the indeterminate, finding the determinate only marginally acceptable. Only one speaker found both verbs equally acceptable.

In example (5) with the numerical quantifier три раза в неделю 'three times a week' there is also a general preferance

for the indeterminate, and three speakers consider it to be the only acceptable verb. However, this preferance is not so strong as in (4):

+d +d +d +i +i
*i ?i +i ?d *d
- 2 2 1 3

(5) Три раза в неделю Мария (ходила^{i}/шла^{d}) в специально для этого нанятый Туманяном домик на окраине города за своей мерой запоздалой старческой страсти.

Максимов, Карантин

'Three times a week Marija would go to a house on the edge of town which Tumanjan had rented especially for this her own measure of belated senile passion.'

With this example, two speakers preferred the determinate, and two found both equally acceptable, but note that no one found only the determinate acceptable. It seems that the presence of the phrase за своей мерой запоздалой старческой страсти 'for her own measure of belated senile passion' prefers a determinate verb of motion (see section III below). Thus this phrase conflicts with the numerical quantifier три раза в неделю 'three times a week' which would mandate selection of an indeterminate verb. Therefore the preferance for an indeterminate verb is not so strong in example (5) as in example (4).

Other adverbial quantifiers, such as всегда 'always' and постоянно 'constantly' also strongly favor the indeterminate. In example (6), not only the adverb всегда, but also the surrounding context support the idea of repetition. Here the author talks about what animals do every year, how they visit the same water hole, from year to year go along the

same paths:

(6) [...] ведь это только на первый взгляд перемещения животных кажутся беспорядочными, а на самом деле вы очень скоро убеждаетесь, что у большинства из них прочно укоренившиеся привычки: они всегда посещают один и тот же водопой, из года в год (ходят[1]/идут[d]) по одним и тем же тропам, направляясь туда, где сейчас обилие пищи, и покидая эти места, как только все будет съедено [...]

+d *i	+d ?i	+d +i	+i ?d	+i *d
1	2	1	1	3

Акимушкин, Мир животных

'[...] but it's only at first glance that the travels of animals seem disorderly, and in fact you are very soon convinced that the majority of them have firmly implanted habits: they always visit one and the same watering place, from year to year they go along the same paths, heading where there is now an abundance of food, and abandoning those places as soon as everything is eaten up [...]'

For three speakers only the indeterminate was acceptable and for one it was strongly preferred. At the same time, for two speakers the determinate was strongly preferred and for one the only acceptable verb. Thus the determinate verb is also possible in this context, and those speakers who preferred it seem to be emphasizing that the motion (repeatedly) proceeds along the same paths (по одним и тем же тропам). But a determinate verb would change the overall theme of this excerpt, where the author's purpose is to discuss the habitual repetition of the animals' movement. When the repetition itself is emphasized, the indeterminate is preferred to show that emphasis. The determinate verb in this context would place emphasis on the path of the motion event.

II. Sequencing. A second factor involved in selection is sequencing. The importance of overlapping sequencing was il-

lustrated in example (1). Where there is non-overlapping sequencing, that is, where the events do not immediately follow one another, or where the sequencing is not necessarily overlapping, some speakers prefer the indeterminate verb, some the determinate verb. This is shown in example (7):

+d *i	+d ?i	+d +i	+i ?d	+i *d
4	1	2	1	1

(7) Ежедневно от 9 часов до полудня он принимал больных и занимался у себя в палате, а после полудня (ездил[i]/<u>ехал</u>[d]) на конке в другую больницу, где вскрывал умерших больных.

Чехов, <u>Попрыгуня</u>

'Every day from 9:00 to noon he would receive patients and work in his ward, then after noon he <u>would go</u> by (horse-)carriage to the other hospital where he would do biopsies on patients who had died.'

Notice that there is a shift from a general preferance for the indeterminate in examples (4), (5) and (6) towards a preferance for the determinate in (7), where four speakers find only the determinate verb acceptable, and one strongly prefers it over the indeterminate. Here the Figure works every morning in one hospital and then after noon goes to the other. The sequencing of events is not necessarily overlapping, and the one speaker who preferred the indeterminate offered that the Figure probably would go home for lunch before going on to the second hospital. This suggests that, when asked to select a verb, the speakers are attempting to contextualize this excerpt. These same eight speakers accepted only the determinate verb for example (1) where the context explicitly includes enough information for verbal selection, so much information that speakers are not free to add their own interpretaiton. In contrast, in example (7) knowledge

of the real world plays a role in interpreting the semantics of the sequencing. Although the doctor clearly works first in his ward and then goes to the hospital, there is no reason to assume that there are no intervening events. In fact, given that the first event ends at noon and the second begins at some time after noon, the existence of an intervening events is likely: this is the appropriate time of day for a lunch break. Thus the sequencing of events in example (7) can be construed as non-overlapping and the indeterminate verb is admissable.

The importance of sequencing is also illustrated in example (8). In the first clause, the speaker talks about motion from any point in the city to the metro stop. In the second clause of (8), the specific path of the motion event from one starting point to one endpoint is given. Here the sequencing is clearly overlapping (the second motion event begins immediately after the first), and the determinate <u>едем</u>^{d} is preferred. Note that this factor alone is sufficient to change the acceptability of the determinate for one speaker, who finds only the indeterminate acceptable in the first clause where the initial point of the motion event is not given.

(8)	(Мы с другом шли от предпоследней станции метро к нему домой. Он мне рукой показывает другую станцию (последнюю) и говорит:)	+d *i	+d ?i	+d +i	+i ?d	+i *d
	-- Мы обычно (<u>ездим</u>/едем) до той станции, до последней, и оттуда (ходим/<u>идем</u>) пешком.	2 3	1 2	4 3	- -	1 -

[personal conversation]

'(A friend and I were walking from the next-to-last metro station to his home. He indicated another station, the last one, with his hand, and said:

-- We usually go to that station, to the last one, and from there go on foot.'

It seems that the number of sequenced events is also relevant: (7) and (8) are two-event chains, and the indeterminate is more acceptable than in (1), a five-event chain.

III. Progressive meaning with explicit reference to emotional state. The expression of progressive meaning with explicit reference to the emotional state of the Figure during the motion event favors the determinate verb of motion. This is clearly related to the use of determinate verbs to denote repeated motion events viewed as ongoing or in process with relation to another event, as seen in the discussion of example (2). In example (5) above a similar reference to emotional state (за своей мерой запоздалой страсти 'for here own measure of belated senile passion') accounts for the fact that the determinate is more likely here than in (4). Explicit reference to the emotional state of the Figure is seen in example (9) with the phrase с удовольствием 'with pleasure':

	+d	+d	+d	+i	+i
	*i	?i	+i	?d	*d
(9) Она знала, что люди при ней с удовольствием (ходят[i]/идут[d]) в магазин. Бабы собирались даже тогда, когда им ничего не надо было купить.	2	1	2	-	3

Распутин, Деньги для Марии

'She knew that with her [running the store], people came to the store with pleasure. The old women gathered even when they didn't need to buy anything.'

However, it is not the case that reference to emotional state of the Figure mandates use of the determinate verb. For example (9), speaker preferance is fairly evenly split between the indeterminate and the determinate verbs: three speakers find only the

indeterminate acceptable and two only the determinate, while two find either verb equally acceptable. This would suggest that not all speakers are sensitive to this particular factor. Example (10) offers strong evidence in support of this hypothesis:

(10) Магазин Минцеля я знал уже давно, так как отец часто посылал меня туда за бумагой, а тетка за мылом. Я всегда (бегал^{i}/<u>бежал</u>^{d}) с радостным любопытством, чтобы полюбоваться на выставленные в окне игрушки.

+d	+d	+d	+i	+i
*i	?i	+i	?d	*d
4	-	-	-	4

Прус, <u>Кукла</u>

'I have known Mincel's store for a long time as my father often sent me there for paper, and my aunt for soap. I always <u>ran</u> [there] with joyful curiosity so as to feast my eyes upon the toys displayed in the window.'

For this example, four speakers found only the determinate acceptable, and four only the indeterminate. In this text there is explicit reference to the Figure's emotional state while he is on his way to the store, namely: <u>с радостным любопытством</u> 'with joyful curiosity'. Since four speakers found the determinate to be the only possible choice for this example, it can be concluded that for these speakers this progressive meaning is crucial. But four speakers found only the indeterminate possible for this same text, and so it would seem that for them this progressive meaning is irrelevant. Clearly some speakers are reacting to some factor in the text which is insignificant for the other speakers.

Example (11) also illustrates explicit reference to the emotional state of the Figure with the phrase <u>нехотя, без удовольствия</u> 'unwillingly, without pleasure':

(11) Мама была отсюда, из этого поселка, выросла тут, а папа городской, но именно он постоянно тянул ее сюда, а мама если и (ездила$_i$/ехала$_d$), так нехотя, без удовольствия, лишь бы не обидеть бабушку.

+d	+d	+d	+i	+i
*i	?i	+i	?d	*d
2	2	1	2	1

Распутин, Век живи - век люби

'Mama was from here, from this village, she grew up here, and papa was from the city, but he was the one who constantly dragged her here, and mama, even if she went, did so unwillingly, without any pleasure, just so as not to offend grandma.'

The indeterminate is less acceptable in (11) than in (9) because in this text there are a number of factors which favor selection of the determinate. Not only is there explicit reference to the emotional state of the Figure, but the verb can be understood as signaling the initial moment of the motion event. And finally, если и 'even if', has a singularizing effect. This may also favor the determinate, as will be discussed in section IV.

IV. Singularization. Another factor which favors the determinate is the presence of singularizing elements in the text, such as всякий раз 'each time' in example (12):

(12) Ревизию она начала просить еще с лета и всякий раз, приезжая за товарами, (ходила/шла) в контору и спрашивала, когда к ней пришлют ревизора.

+d	+d	+d	+i	+i
*i	?i	+i	?d	*d
1	4	-	1	2

Распутин, Деньги для Марии

'She had begun asking for an audit way back in the summer and every time she came for goods, she would go to the office and ask when they would send an auditor to her.'

Here the motion event is singularized, where one motion is presented as typical of many. The determinate is preferred by five speakers, due to a combination of this singularizing effect of the phrase всякий раз 'each time' along with the semantic

sense of sequenced events (first the Figure arrive, then she goes to the office, and then she asks about an audit).

The role of the conditional in singularization is also seen in (13), in the second instance of a verb of motion after если 'if'. As mentioned above, example (13) is the sole example here which does not have an explicit goal in the text, although the context of the story makes it clear that the motion is aimed at some goal. However, a potentially crucial difference between this example and the others is that here there is no single specific goal. In (13a) the motion is simply presented as repeated and the indeterminate may be used generically. Then there is a switch to a singularized motion event, indicated by если 'if' in (13b):

	+d *i	+d ?i	+d +i	+i ?d	+i *d
(13a) Небо было куда надежнее земли. Но когда жена (летала^{i}/ летела^{d}) без него, Сергеев испытывал страх. Да и не просто страх, а какой-то жалкий бабий ужас.	1	1	2	1	3
(13b) Если они (летали/летели) вместе, он был так же спокоен, как и во время собственных--без нее--воздушных путешествий. Но даже самый короткий ее полет [. . .] повергал его в панику своей короткостью.	4	3	1	-	-

Нагибин, Мягкая посадка

'The sky was much more reliable than the earth. But when his wife flew without him, Sergeev experienced fear. And not just fear, but some kind of pitiful old-lady terror.
If they were flying together, he was just as calm as during his own (without her) air trips. But even her shortest flight would throw him into panic precisely because of its shortness.'

For (12a), for three of the speakers found only the indeterminate verb was acceptable and for one it was strongly preferred. This is in opposition to (12b), where the determinate was the only acceptable verb for four of the speakers, and highly preferred by

three others. When если 'if' was replaced by когда 'when', speakers found the indeterminate more acceptable, thereby supporting the hypothesis that it is the word если which favors the determinate in this text.

V. Summary and Conclusions.

The factors involved in selection of an idneterminate or determinate verb to denote repeated motion events aimed at one specific goal can be summarized as follows:

1. Quantifiers. Numerical quantifiers (such as 'two times a year' and adverbial quantifiers (such as 'always', 'often') favor an indeterminate verb.

2. Sequencing. When the motion event occurs in a chain of events in overlapping sequencing, the determinate verb is favored. When the sequencing of event is non-overlapping, either the indeterminate or the determinate may be used, depending upon other factors in the text.

3. Singularization. The presence of singularizing elements (such as 'each time') in the text favors selection of a determinate verb.

4. Progressive meaning with explicit reference to emotional state. For some speakers the use of a progressive meaning with explicit reference to emotional state favors the determinate verb. As seen in the discussion of example (10), this factor is not relevant for all speakers.

The preceding discussion leads to two conclusions. First, it should be noted that the fact that determinate verbs are sensitive to the semantic/syntactic factors of overlapping/non-overlapping sequencing, processual meaning, and singularization

is entirely predicatable given the relationship of these verbs to the temporal parameter. Determinate verbs of motion often specify the time point or period during which a motion event occurs, and use of determinate verbs is very much dependent on a combination of spatial and temporal configurations.

And second, the data here indicate that speaker chocie plays an important role in verb selection. Moreover, there is evidence that speaker choice is a more complicated issue than is normally presented. Forsyth asserts that a speaker's decision to express an action perfectively is based on a "subjective assessment of the semantic-syntactical value to be given to the expression of the action in a given context, the 'choice' being governed by considerations of syntax, emphasis and emotional expression" (Forsyth 1970:357). But my data indicate that, for verbs of motion at least, there is a great deal of variation among individual speakers as to what factors are relevant in verb selection. For none of the examples (4) - (13) do even half the native speakers questioned find both verbs equally grammatical. Speaker choice seems to be in part determined by an assessment of which factors are relevant for which verbs regardless of context.

Notes

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1. The terms motion event and Figure are adapted from Leonard Talmy's work on motion verbs. See Talmy 1975 and Talmy 1986.

2. See, for example, Bitextina, Murav'eva and Judina 1972. It should also be noted that Foote 1967 presents a somewhat different treatment of the use of indeterminate and determinate verbs to signal repeated motion events. He argues that the indeterminate presents a complex or collective view of the motion, and the determinate a simple or singulative view (see Foote 1967:16). However, Foote's hypothesis cannot account for the data which will be presented here.

3. All literary examples in this paper were tested with eight native speakers of Russian, all native Muscovites who are currently living in Moscow. None of the speakers teach Russian.

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